

THE OMNIBUS

STUDENT NUMBER: 11301525

CENTRE NUMBER: 180

ENGLISH
IDENTIFICATION
Student No.: 11301525
School No.: 180
Number of Pieces: 1/3
Category and Description: Theatre script
ATTACH THIS CARD SECURELY TO EACH PART OF THE PROJECT. DO NOT PIN.

Characters:

JOHN CAMPBELL: *A 43-year-old real estate agent. He is dressed in an inexpensive suit, wearing spectacles and looks as though age hasn't done him any justice.*

JANE CULLEN: *A middle class housewife. She is wearing a long, floral cotton dress, with a worn out fake leather handbag. Her hair is tied in a tight bun, wrinkles lightly surround her mouth and eyes. Medium height, and round at the stomach and hips.*

JENNIFER COOK: *An affluent business owner. Attractive and well presented, dressed in a suit jacket and skirt, slim and confident. Her business attire is obviously expensive and she carries a lap top bag as well as a leather handbag.*

STEVE JOBS: *Founder and ex-CEO of a technology company. His clothes show that he is unsure of what generation and social class he belongs to. He is wearing a shirt imprinted 'Long Live the 70's', as well as a tie and neat slacks. He has a traditional ticket collector's hat on.*

EGO: *Surreal character seen only by audience (sex undefined). Ego is dressed in a white hospital gown, barefoot, white shower cap on head, face powdered.*

ID: *Surreal character seen only by audience (sex undefined). The Id is a replica of the Ego. These two characters are essentially interchangeable and work together to function as a whole.*

BUS DRIVER BILL: *unseen, unknown, and yet important.*

Setting

All characters are seated on a bus. There are two rows of chairs divided by one metre wide aisles. The last row (the backseat) is not divided and on top of this row there is a frame that represents the emergency exit window. The bus's destination is unknown and irrelevant.

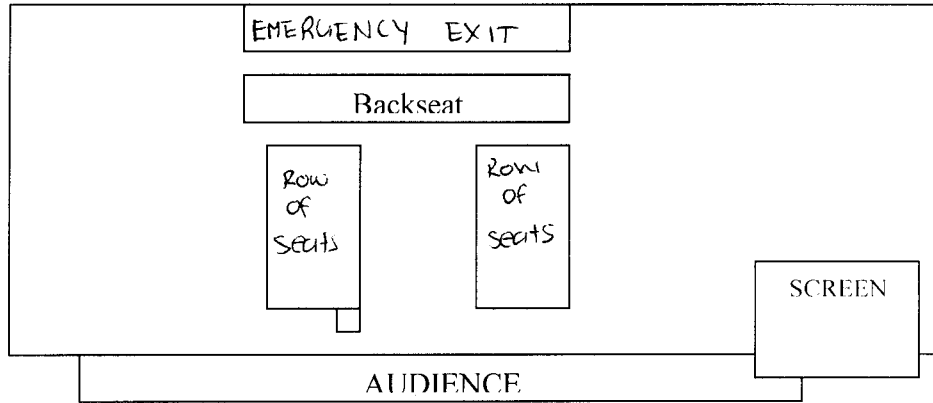
A revolving stage is used which shows us different views of the bus, either front view (where the invisible bus driver should be seated), back view (the exit frame is facing the audience) and side view (the bus drivers position is at the right of the stage facing the projector board). The revolving stage is used to due to the static nature of the bus ride. Ultra violet lighting is used to identify Ego and Id, creating an illusionary dream state.

White screen is situated down stage right, projecting excerpts at the start of each scene. A light is projected on the screen at the beginning of each scene.

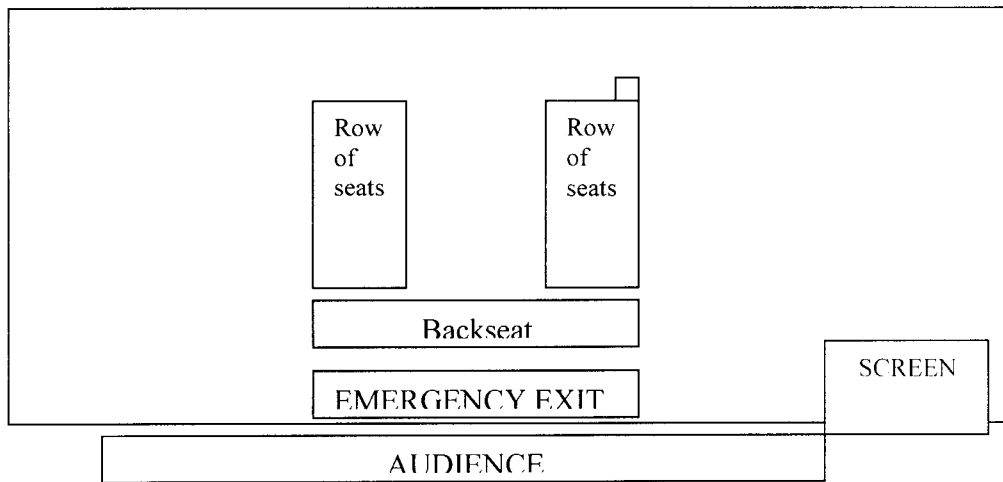
Sound effects include engine-humming sounds to indicate that the bus is travelling and reverse signals when bus reverses and also the sound of glass shattering.

Revolving Stage Views

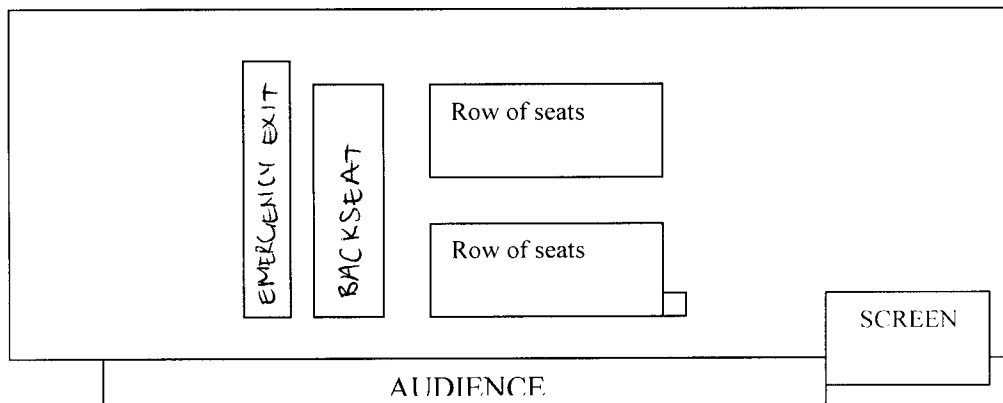
VIEW #1: Front Of Bus



VIEW #2: Back Of Bus



VIEW #3: Side View



SCENE ONE

(Shown on screen)

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, “It means just what I choose it to mean- neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master- that is all”

LEWIS CARROL *Through The Looking Glass*

[Ego and Id dressed in white hospital gowns, powdered faces are seated at the front of the bus, to the left of the driver. There is complete darkness at first. The dialogue is at first in whispers, and then develops in a conversation. When the conversation reaches a normal volume a blue light comes on.]

EGO: Who is United Arab Emirates?

ID: Why is Che Guevera?

EGO: When is wrong?

ID: Where was she that stooped?

EGO: Merely coloured old man I used to call poppa.

ID: How was Cabinet of Barons?

EGO: Ho-ho berry berry.

ID: Red-nosed Rudolph!

EGO: Judas?

ID: No, silly.

EGO: He too called me poppa.

ID: What do you mean?

EGO: Whatever you want me to mean.

ID: No, no don't be mean. That's it, I'm leaving.

EGO: Where have you gone?

ID: Out to sea.

EGO: Poppa come back, I can't see!

ID: It's me, Poppa!

EGO: When are you?

ID: Whenever you want me to be.

EGO: My head is aching.

ID: The rain is falling.

EGO: Let me enjoy a little solitude.

ID: Solitude is a sin.

EGO: So let me be sinful.

ID: JC once said 'Thou shall not grin'.

EGO: Just be quiet for a moment.

ID: A moment too long?

EGO: Let it go.

ID: Let what go?

EGO: Stop it please.

ID: Stop what?

EGO: Making noise.

ID: Then you won't hear anything.

EGO: Exactly!

ID: Exactly?

EGO: Stop it please.

ID: Please.

EGO: Stop it!

ID: Stop please.

EGO: Stop it!

ID: It please.

EGO: Stop it!

ID: It!

EGO: *[Screeches]* STOP!!!!!!

[The word 'stop' is heard echoing until it fades away.]

Bus signal for a bus to stop is heard. Blue light fades. Lights on. Stage revolves and we get a side view. We see that Ego and Id are seated at the front of the bus. Jennifer Cook has signalled the driver. Jane Cullen is asleep. John Campbell is reading.]

JENNIFER: Next stop driver *[Now talking into her mobile phone]* I don't care whether you've slept in the last week or not. I want it on my desk tomorrow morning, nine sharp! *[Listens]* Your husband is sick is he? *[No sign of concern visible]* Well, since he is sitting around at home doing nothing, get him to help you. *[Listens]* No buts. If this project is not completed, I will see to it that your career at Corporate Inc. is put to an abrupt end. Furthermore, I'll see to it that no reference is supplied- which effectively means that you have been unemployed for the last eighteen months *[Listens]* Yes, I am threatening you. Do you- what? *[Mimicking]* I'm not a resource; I'm a human being. *[Firmly]* That attitude will get you nowhere. If you are not a resource- what purpose do you serve? *[Listens]* Hello? Hello? *[Hangs up]* Incompetent twit. *[Sits angrily, not noticing the bus's failure to stop]*

JOHN: *[Who had been listening]* That's not a good way to start such a beautiful day. *[Jennifer smiles at him, dismissing him. There is an uncomfortable silence]*

JOHN: I know that it is not any of my business, but couldn't you have been a little more lenient? I mean, her husband is ill and she has an obvious workload that-

JENNIFER: [*Defensively*] Lenient? Does leniency lead to productivity? We need to launch our product midday tomorrow! Our Asian competitors are much more productive than we are. And do you wish to know why? I'll tell you why; it's because they are not burdened with the stupid concepts of 'ethics' and 'moral obligations' to their employees. Domestic firms are so restricted by government regulations in the workplace, that if anyone is to blame, blame the bloody politicians!

JOHN: Such regulation is simply catering for human needs.

JENNIFER: But what about the dollars? The profit motive?

JOHN: That's catering for corporate greed.

JENNIFER: My employee is wasting time. Time is money. Money is time. One needs money to be happy. True happiness takes time.

JOHN: Hold on. I think you've muddled too much with all of that. There is something missing-

JENNIFER: Time! My point exactly [*Conclusively*] Anyway I don't believe I asked for your opinion thank you, Marx. I do my fair share of community service. [*John raises his eyebrows questioningly*] Just last week at the train station I gave a homeless man directions to the TAB. So don't accuse me with your left-wing views.

[Screaming is heard from the rear of the bus. The voice is offstage. Jane is still asleep. Jennifer tends to her laptop and John returns to his book. The screams seem to go unnoticed.]

STEVE: Help! Help! Somebody! Anybody! Help. Arrrggh! Stop the bus. I'm caught under the wheel. Somebody...anybody...my body! Help!

[Blue spotlight on Ego and Id who rush to the back and peer out of the emergency exit at the rear of the bus. As they make their way to the back, the stage turns, and makes a complete revolution, therefore, the bus is still on its side. The Ego and Id peer out of the emergency exit window. This would be the back of the bus, however to the audience, it is the side of the bus away from the excerpt screen.]

* * *

ID: What is it?

EGO: A human I believe.

ID: What else can you see?

EGO: Everything but the things I can't see.

ID: Who is it?

EGO: A man...no, a woman...actually, I'm not sure. Both probably.

ID: How are we meant to tell?

EGO: Open their legs, apparently there's some sort of tag. Some sort of discriminator that serves to discriminate. [*Screams still heard*] Oh, where's Foucault when you need him?

ID: Six feet underground.

EGO: Or six feet under a pile of books.

ID: I think the bus driver failed to see it waiting at the bus stop and it tried to board the bus. It probably had an important engagement.

EGO: Impudent.

ID: No, I said *important*.

EGO: So did I.

ID: The poor soul is probably in a rush. Why is everybody running around aimlessly, like headless chickens screaming 'time is running out'?

EGO: They're afraid of death I suppose.

ID: But they are alive. Why fear what is not?

EGO: It seems that to live is the rarest thing. Most people exist. That is all.

ID: Why were people existing in the express lane with '8 items or less'.

EGO: Oh, at the supermarket. Chronomentraphobia mixed with decidophobia. It was the express lane. The express lanes are for those who don't know where they are going, but want to get there quickly.

ID: Get where?

EGO: No one knows. That is why they're in such a hurry to find out.

EGO: I don't understand your terminology. The words are confusing me.

ID: Classic case of verbophobia.

EGO: I don't like the sound of those phobias especially.

ID: Phobophobia.

EGO: I get that one. Didn't somebody say, there is nothing to fear, but...*[Unsure of the last few words]* fear of wealth?

[A body that is propelled inwards through the emergency exit frame, interrupts their conversation. Glass is heard shattering. The blue light fades out. The figure gathers itself and walks down the bus aisle]

STEVE: Tickets, ladies and gentleman. I must see a valid ticket, otherwise you are not permitted to be on this bus. If for any reason you are not in possession of a ticket, the law requires that you exit immediately. *[He walks up to the sleeping Jane]* Excuse me ma'am, I must see your ticket promptly. Ma'am? Ma'am?

JOHN: *[Hands over his ticket]* She has been asleep for some time, sir. Perhaps you could collect her ticket at a later time.

STEVE: *[All professionalism aside]* Time is not progressive. There is no distinction between the past and the present, simply progression countered by regression. So it really makes no difference when I collect the tickets- time is a fixed entity.

JENNIFER: *[Disagrees knowingly]* Time keeps me going forward. So, I'd have to disagree with you. My business is conducted around the principles of time. It's what keeps me punctual.

STEVE: PUNCTUALITY IS THE THEFT OF TIME! [*Trance-like arm gestures symbolising a clock's arms*] Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick, tick, tick, tick [*Faster*] tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-TOCK!

[*Blue spotlight on Ego and Id who are still seated at the back of the bus.*]

EGO: As you approach the speed of light, time slows down. When you reach it, time stands still. When you exceed it, time goes backwards.

ID: That's far too scientific. Time can only be known through a watch.

EGO: Says who?

ID: Convention.

EGO: You tell Mr Convention that He said a time would come when He would return to judge the living and the dead.

[*Blue light fades*]

JENNIFER: Someone ought to educate that man on-

STEVE: Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-tick-education-tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock-is-tock-tock-tock-tock-tock-indoctrination.

JENNIFER: [*Looking over at John*] Community service eh? When is the community going to serve me? Next stop driver. [*The bus continues its course*]

[*Blue spotlight. Id bursts into tears, holding a book against its chest, runs to the front of the bus. Ego reluctantly follows. Id throws itself across two seats. Ego sits behind Id*]

EGO: What now? What are you reading? [*Leans over to read the title*] *War Memoirs: The Victims*. Is the book upsetting you?

ID: [*Sobbing melodramatically*] Mrs Jones [*Each word is proceeded by either a sob or sniffle or both*] had three sons who went to war as well as her husband. She lost them all in their acts of bravery. All four of them!

EGO: Sensitivity is simply an ostentatious display of insincere affection displayed by pathos seeking beings who have a burning desire to attract attention- whatever the sort! [*In one breath*]
 Anyway, don't ever judge a book by its content.

ID: Who taught you that?

EGO: [*Shrugs*] It's the oldest trick in the book.

ID: [*Still sobbing*] Brave, brave soldiers.

EGO: [*Annoyed*] Let me read that:

"Dear Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss or Mr and Mrs Jones,

Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband/son/father/brother or uncle was killed/wounded/reported missing in action or committed suicide.

Yours Sincerely, Faithfully or Truly..."

[*Id is overwhelmed by emotion and begins crying hysterically*]

ID: She has four copies of the same letter. It's so heart-wrenching, having to lose all her loved ones in the Great War.

EGO: It's about as descriptive as a blank sheet of paper.

ID: It says so much.

EGO: What about the gaps and omissions?

ID: The message is clear.

EGO: To whom?

ID: Everyone.

EGO: It all means nothing!

ID: Read the words carefully.

EGO: Words. Words. They're all we have to sow on. The words aren't communicating [*Doesn't get a response*] Well, say something.

ID: I think we communicate only too well in our silence. I'd like to take a moment of silence to remember the heroes of our country. *[Salutes and holds the position]*

EGO: *[Muttering]* All we have left is the lexicon, can it be salvaged? *[Loudly]* That is my question.

ID: It answers all the questions *[Now at ease]*

EGO: Whose questions?

ID: The Question.

EGO: But what about the soldiers?

ID: What soldiers?

[Darkness]

SCENE TWO

(On Screen)

“He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be

One against whom there was no official complaint

And all the reports on his conduct agree

That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint.”

W.H AUDEN *The Unknown Citizen*

[Blue Light. Ego and Id slowly walking in the bus aisle. The bus is still on its side. They now walk away from the emergency exit, toward the bus driver’s seat. Their shadows can be seen behind them]

ID: There is somebody following us. *[Looking over shoulder]*

EGO: Yes. Two people.

ID: Who are they?

EGO: I don’t know, I can’t recognise them.

[Ego and Id have lights projected on them that produce shadows behind them. They fail to realise that the people that are following them are merely their shadows]

ID: They’re getting awfully close.

EGO: Perhaps we should confront them. *[Both turn around]*. They’ve gone. How very peculiar.

ID: Peculiar. They probably wanted some direction.

EGO: Quite peculiar.

[Light fades and there is darkness. Ego and Id return to where they were situated at the opening of this scene whilst the lights are off. The blue light resumes and once again they make their way towards the bus driver.]

EGO: There is somebody following us again.

ID: Yes, the same two people.

EGO: Who are they?

ID: I don't know. I can't recognise them.

EGO: They're getting awfully close.

ID: Perhaps we should confront them. *[Both turn around]* They've gone. How very peculiar.

EGO: Quite peculiar!

ID: I wonder what they wanted. Some direction perhaps.

EGO AND ID: Maybe we can help find them.

[Blue light fades. We see that Steve is doing a handstand in the bus aisle and staring at Jennifer red faced]

JENNIFER: What are you doing?

STEVE: Creating visual order out of visual chaos.

[John chuckles in disbelief]

STEVE: *[Alarmed]* Oh my God!

[He jumps to his feet and grabs Jennifer's lap-top out of her hands]

JENNIFER: Excuse me, give me my lap-top back right this minute!

STEVE: How dare you exploit me. You do not own me!

[Jumping from seat to seat lap-top clutched in hand]

JENNIFER: It's not part of you, it's my lap-top you ignorant nuisance. It's the latest Toshiba model I might add- I doubt you could even afford the carry bag!

[John continues reading his book, oblivious to the fiasco. Jennifer and Steve fighting over the lap-top, in a tug-of-war until it slips out of both their hands and smashes into pieces on the floor. Jennifer throws herself to the floor pathetically trying to piece it back together]

JENNIFER: Look what you've done. I'm ruined! My life was on that computer.

STEVE: My life is that computer.

[Jane wakes up]

JENNIFER: Apologise now! What do you have to say for yourself?

STEVE: Nothing. It's all been said before.

JENNIFER: All my work, my everything...I'M FINISHED!

STEVE: [*Walking backwards*] My life is that computer. My life was that computer. I am a computer. The computer was born of me. [*Falls out of the emergency exit window*] Death of the computer!

JOHN: [*Looks up from his book. Jane goes back to sleep*] What is going on? [*To Jennifer*] Are you OK? You look a little shaken up. I'll get the bus to pull over for you. Driver, please pull over. This is an emergency.

[*The bus begins to reverse and this is conveyed via the reversing sound effect.. We hear Steve Jobs shrieking*]

You must stop reversing and take us to the nearest hospital.

[*The bus continues to reverse*]

JENNIFER: I'm ruined now. I'm nothing.

JOHN: You should probably call somebody.

JENNIFER: [*Begins to dial*] My mobile! There's hope!

[*Jane wakes up again*]

JANE: [*Not speaking to anyone directly*] I just had the strangest dream. Except it didn't quite end. I don't know what happened to the villain.

JOHN: There was no conclusion?

JANE: Unfortunately not.

JOHN: If that's the case, it's not worth remembering.

[*Returns to his book, then takes his wallet out checks something and places it in his lap*]

JANE: That's my wallet there.

JOHN: Excuse me? The wallet, is that what you are talking about, ma'am?

JANE: My wallet.

JOHN: [*Confused*] Your wallet belongs to you? Am I right?

JANE: No, your wallet doesn't belong to you.

JOHN: My wallet doesn't belong to me?

JANE: Yes. So it must belong to me.

JOHN: I received it as a Christmas gift.

JANE: You gave it to me as a Christmas gift.

JOHN: Do I even know you?

JANE: The question is, do you know yourself?

JOHN: I've had 43 years to come to terms with who I am, so yes, I believe I know who I am.

What's wrong with everybody today? And who in God's name are you?

JANE: God is his name?

JOHN: Whose name?

JANE: God's.

JOHN: What?

JANE: No, God.

JOHN: What on earth are you talking about?

JANE: Now you're catching on. Yes, He was once on earth.

JOHN: Jesus Christ!

JANE: Exactly. That is his other name.

JOHN: Names. Names. Names.

JANE: You have all the names right, just not your own.

JOHN: Names, wallets. Just leave it alone.

JANE: Try to combine the two.

[*Pause*]

[Screams are heard and Steve Jobs comes flying through the front bus window frame. Glass heard shattering]

STEVE: Tickets everybody. Each passenger must carry a valid ticket in order to barter it for the Apple. *[Collects Jane and Jennifer's ticket and stands expectantly in front of John]*

STEVE: Sir, your ticket please.

JOHN: I gave it to you earlier. Do you not recall?

STEVE: *[Professionally]* Every passenger must hold a valid bus ticket.

JOHN: There is a little confusion between you and me. I've already had my ticket collected- by you in fact.

STEVE: *[Frustrated]* The law requires that I collect the passenger's tickets.

JOHN: Yes, that is why I no longer have one.

STEVE: What! No ticket? That means that you are not permitted to be on the bus.

JOHN: *[Exploding impatiently]* BUT I GAVE YOU MY TICKET!

STEVE: I am a ticket collector who must see that no passenger travels without a ticket. You must exit the bus immediately. Driver, pull over please we have an illegal passenger on the bus.

[The bus continues reversing]

JOHN: Hell has returned.

JANE: *[To Jennifer]* Excuse me, but who is that gentleman?

STEVE: *[To Jane]* My name is Mr Tom O'Bedlam.

JENNIFER: *[Annoyed at having been interrupted]* A demon. He smashed my computer.

STEVE: Apples. Anyone for an Apple?

JANE: *[Questioningly]* Computer?

[Jennifer has already returned to her phone conversation]

JOHN: Whatever can go wrong, has gone wrong.

JANE: Just ignore him and see if he goes away.

STEVE: [*Reciting out loud*] “The Press are convinced that he bought the paper everyday. And that his reactions to advertisement were normal in every way. Policies taken out in his name prove...in his name prove...his name prove...his name...name...”

JOHN: I’ve had it with names! What is this? Some sort of sick joke? I get it- all three of you are plotting against me!

STEVE: [*Continuing casually*] “...and his health card shows he was in hospital but left it cured.”

JOHN: Now it is all clear. You all have some sort of obsession with names and wallets!

JANE: I may have an obsession with wallets and names, but you have neither.

JOHN: I don’t want such ludicrous obsessions, whatever the sort.

JANE: No siree, you are quite mistaken, you have neither a name nor a wallet.

JOHN My name is John Campbell, I am a 43-year old real estate agent, and this is my brown leather wallet.

JANE: No, my name is John Campbell and that is my brown leather wallet in your hand.

JOHN: No. It’s not.

JANE: Well then prove me wrong.

JOHN: How?

[*Jane snatches his wallet*]

JOHN: Hey! Hey! What are you doing? Give it back. Somebody, help! There’s a crazy thief on the bus [*Bus is heard as it continues to reverse, the sound effect continues*]

[*Blue light. Stage revolves. Ego and Id who were previously seated at the bus driver’s end, shown on its side, now face the audience as the bus assumes a ‘bus front’ position*].

ID: Bus.

EGO: It won’t stop.

ID: What bus?

EGO: The bus.

ID: There are no choices. No journeys. Only destinations.

EGO AND ID: Next stop driver!

[Blue light fades bus resumes side position]

JANE: Who are you now? You are a body carrying a corpse. A no-one. I don't see John Campbell written on the wallet anywhere. It doesn't even belong to you.

JOHN: I'm trying to be mature and assertive here. Please give me my wallet back. Take the money, if that is what you are after.

JANE: *[Examining a card]* You weren't even born!

JOHN: I was born on the 29th of September 1957.

JANE: According to your trusty wallet, you weren't even born.

JOHN: How can a wallet tell you that? You must be crazy lady, you belong in a mental institution.

A bloody fool you are. Fool!

STEVE: Yes?

JANE: You aren't John Campbell, because John Campbell was never born. And this wallet isn't even yours.

JOHN: What about your wallet and your date of birth?

JANE: All certified and proven.

JOHN: Certified and proven...what?

JANE: Proving me, justifying my existence. Without my wallet, I cease to exist. Without my wallet, I'm not on the dole, I do not have children or Medicare.

JOHN: But I AM someone and there are important things in my life also. One of those things is a wallet.

JANE: But no name on it.

JOHN: So what?

JANE: Who is going to believe it is yours?

STEVE: Believing is seeing.

JOHN, JENNIFER AND JANE: *[To Steve]* SHUT UP!

JENNIFER: *[Points her finger threateningly]* You mindless twerp, just mind your own business.

STEVE: No, not mindless. A maimed mind. Betrayed. *[Begins to rock back and forth in his seat]*
cold...cold...cold...cold...

JANE: He can't be serious. Or is he?

STEVE: *[Continues rocking and shivering and is ignored]* Yes, I'm the legitimate one.

JANE: *[To John]* I think you have stolen it! *[Jumps out of her seat]* Thief! Thief! I found the real thief on this bus! Driver, next stop.

JOHN: Now what was that for?

JANE: For the sake of the wallet.

JOHN: Look, I thought we had already established that the wallet belongs to me. I even have the receipt.

JANE: The wallet exists. It doesn't mean that it belongs to you.

STEVE: Yes, the wallet was born, but you weren't since-

JOHN: Excuse me?

STEVE: *[Avoiding the question]* The world belonged to me once, before I had it stolen from me. I'm no longer a successful entrepreneur. I'm just mediocre. I absolutely hate it.

[Blue light]

ID: Some men are born hating.

EGO: Some men achieve hatred.

ID: And some men have hatred thrust upon them.

[Blue light fades]

JANE: Who are you? The wallet can't belong to you if there is no you.

JOHN: You said you had children.

JANE: Yes, I added four people to the population which our Eugenist expert says is the right number for a person of my generation.

JOHN: How do you know that they were born? Do they exist?

JANE: My eldest son's name is 678951, my second son 761223 and my twin girls are 458895a and 458895b.

JOHN: What does that mean?

JANE: [*Throws him his wallet back*] Think about it.

[The bus begins to shake. Jane, John and Jennifer stand up and attempt to look out the emergency exit frame. Steve Jobs stand still frozen with terror. He then begins to rock back and forth shivering.]

JENNIFER: [*Looking through the back window.*] It looks like we are going to reverse straight into the metal gates!

STEVE: [*Alarmed*] Bill?

JOHN: Oh no, not the Gate!

STEVE: Bill!

JENNIFER: [*Stands up*] GATES! Driver watch the gates!

[Ego and Id remain undisturbed]

STEVE: Watch the Gates! Watch the Gates! You can't trust them!

[Running around in a frenzy. We hear the bus crashing. The bus is filled with smoke. It is difficult for the audience to see anything. As the bus crashes the stage begins to revolve quickly, glass is heard as well as the faint sound of ambulance sirens.]

JOHN: Is everybody OK?

[The smoke clears up, the bus resumes side position. John stands up after being crouched in the bus aisle]

JENNIFER: Yes.

[Still shocked but quickly regains her composure fixing the collar of her shirt]

JANE: Umm...I'm...OK.

[Sits on a seat]

STEVE: AARRGGHH! Help me! Help me! My back! My back!

[John, Jane and Jennifer see that Steve is laying across the back seat of the bus in pain. They rush to his aid]

JOHN: *[Back to audience, therefore Steve is not seen]* What's wrong?

STEVE: I've been stabbed in the back!

JANE: By what?

STEVE: Gates.

JANE: Oh goodness, part of the gate must have struck him in the back. Poor Tom.

STEVE: Gone! Gone! Stupid Gates!

JOHN: Are you feeling OK?

JENNIFER: Perhaps he hit his head. It'll probably do him some good!

STEVE: Apple.

JANE: I think he is hungry, quick someone grab him an apple.

STEVE: Computer.

JENNIFER: What does he want now?

STEVE: *[Begins to close his eyes]* Microsoft.

JENNIFER: *[Patience wearing thin]* WHAT?

JANE: Tom, can you hear me? Tell us what we can do to help.

STEVE: *[Quivering]* Blankets

JANE: He must be cold.

JOHN: Ask him some questions, to keep him conscious.

JANE: *[Panicking]* Umm...how old are you?

STEVE: Eight and thirty.

JANE: What time is it?

STEVE: Eight and thirty.

JOHN: He must be delirious, he keeps repeating himself.

STEVE: *[Whimpering and repeating]* The foul fiend bites my back.

JENNIFER: I don't have any time for this lunatic *[Walks away]* Where's my handbag?

JANE: Where's my handbag?

[Searching wildly]

[John laughs hysterically, Steve now forgotten]

JOHN: Now I get it.

SCENE THREE

(Shown on screen)

“You live so close to the truth, it becomes a permanent blur in the corner of your eye”

TOM STOPPARD *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

[The stage is flooded with smoke. Spotlight moving from character to character. Steve, Jennifer, John and Jane are standing at the front of the stage in a line. They are off the bus. The bus settings have quickly been removed. They all crouch simultaneously, heads buried in knees. Laughter, whispering and sobbing heard offstage. Jennifer unfreezes, stands up. There is blinding light in her eyes. She tries to shield the light from her eyes. Gibberish is heard coming from the direction of the light, Jennifer responds to it]

JENNIFER: No. No. I'm not your mother. My name is Jennifer Cook, I am the CEO of Corporate Inc. I can't iron your school uniform! Who are you? I'm expected to launch my project- stop wailing! Stop wailing! *[Freezes, covering her eyes]*

[Laughter, whispering and sobbing heard offstage. Jane unfreezes, stands up. There is blinding light in her eyes. She tries to shield the light from her eyes. Gibberish is heard coming from the direction of the light, Jane responds to it]

JANE: What is this? Some kind of prank? Sorry, I can't help you. How am I supposed to know which house is most suitable for your family's budget? Mr Campbell? Who is that? *[Freezes in the same position as Jennifer]*

[Laughter, whispering and sobbing heard offstage. John unfreezes, stands up. There is blinding light in his eyes. He tries to shield the light from his eyes. Gibberish is heard coming from the direction of the light, John responds to it]

JOHN: What do you mean I have 15 minutes to start? Japan. What about Japan? Nervous. Why should I be nervous? Launch of a project? *[He too freezes standing, and covers his eyes]*

[Laughter, whispering and sobbing heard offstage. Steve unfreezes, stands up. There is blinding light in his eyes. He tries to shield the light from his eyes. Gibberish is heard coming from the direction of the light. Steve responds to it.]

STEVE: You must let me in the office at once. Don't call security. This company belongs to me! I'm the Pirate of Silicon Valley! I'm the Pirate of Silicon Valley! I'm the Pirate of Silicon Valley!
[Freezes and covers his eyes]

[Flashlights beaming as characters move to four corners of stage. Stage starts revolving and continues circling.]

JOHN: I am Jane Cullen.

JENNIFER: I am John Campbell.

JANE: I am Jennifer Cook.

[Said in tune]

JOHN: I own an advertising firm.

JENNIFER: I am a housewife.

JANE: I am a real estate agent.

[Said simultaneously]

JOHN: I have no car.

JENNIFER: I drive a Mercedes.

JOHN: I drive a Commodore.

[Said simultaneously]

JOHN: I have private health care.

JENNIFER: I use Medicare.

JANE: I have no health care.

[Steve moves to the centre of the stage and the other characters walk up to him and begin circling him. Stage is still revolving. Ego and Id appear from the wings of the stage and eyes fixed across the stage on each other. They stand still]

STEVE: *[Whilst making clock arm gestures with his arms. He is pleading and screaming]*

Be thy mouth black or white

Tooth that poison if bite

Mastiff, greyhound mongrel grim

Hound or spaniel, brach or him

Or bobtail tyke or twindle-tail

Tom will make him weep and wail

For, with throwing thus my head

Dogs leapt the hatch and are fled *[His gestures become anti-clockwise]*

JENNIFER, JOHN, JANE: *[Whispering]* My reality is gone. Do I still exist? / *repeat six times, and continue circling Steve]*

[Blue light. Short silence. Ego and Id walk in from wings of stage]

EGO: No context. No construction.

ID: No reality. Deconstruction.

[Darkness]

SCENE FOUR

(Screen)

“The desire for verification is understandable, but cannot always be satisfied. There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false”

HAROLD PINTER *The Caretaker*

[Back on the bus. Bus setting resumes with engine humming and bus reversing. All passengers are seated in Scene One seat arrangements. Steve Jobs is pacing nervously up and down the aisle. The bus assumes front position, with bus driver position at the front of the stage.]

STEVE: I must get off the bus at once. Driver, pull over immediately!

[Bus continues]

STEVE: Next stop driver.

JOHN: I don't think he can hear you.

STEVE: Who is directing this bus? A human, or an electronic consciousness? Is anybody listening to me? Anybody? Anybody? I want to see the death of technological hegemony.

[Spotlight on Steve as he stands up on his seat preparing himself for his soliloquy] The wicked fiend has drawn through fire and flame across fords and into whirlpools, over bogs and quagmires. Heaven protect you from the whirlwinds, from the destructive influence of technology- false of heart, light of ear, hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Is man no more than this? A computer. What is a computer? It is neither hand, nor foot, nor arm, nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man. O be some other name...*[He has an idea]* Macintosh!
[Jumps out of the emergency exit shrieking. Spotlight off]

JOHN: *[Picks up is wallet, Jennifer's handbag and Jane's handbag and puts them in his lap]* You are Mrs JC. *[To Jennifer]*

JENNIFER: Yes, so I am. But is that any of your business?

JOHN: No. But is that any of your business?

JENNIFER: I beg your pardon sir. Do you know who I am?

JOHN: No, but I know what you were.

JENNIFER: Well, what was I?

JOHN: A middle class citizen with 4 children, no car and no private healthcare.

JENNIFER: That is just absurd [*Turns away*] Next stop thanks, driver.

[*John now turns to Jane*]

JOHN: I would never have guessed that you are a business mastermind.

JANE: What do you mean?

JOHN: CEO of a multimillion dollar company. That is quite an achievement.

JANE: Thank you, but I think you are a little confused. I don't work, I'm a full-time mother.

JOHN: No, no. It's all been proven. It's all been certified.

JANE: Excuse me?

JOHN: And your wallet. It doesn't exist.

JANE: Exist?

JOHN: Exist.

JENNIFER: Exist!

JOHN: Neither do you. [*Looking at Jennifer and then Jane*] Nor you.

JENNIFER: Excuse me, but my name is Mrs JC. Don't get on the wrong side of me. Do you know who I am?

JANE: You am I!

JOHN: I am the two of you!

JANE: My name is JC.

JENNIFER: My name is JC.

JOHN: You are both mistaken, for I am the only JC on this bus.

JENNIFER: What?

JANE: Who?

JENNIFER: How?

JANE: Why?

[John clutches handbags]

JOHN: I am JC. I am JC. I am a housewife. I am CEO of Corporate Inc. I have four children. I have no children. I don't drive. I drive a Mercedes.

JANE: But I am JC!

JENNIFER: And I am JC!

JOHN: Prove it.

JENNIFER: Prove it?

JANE: Prove what?

JOHN: Prove the existence of JC.

[Short silence]

JANE: I exist, therefore I am.

JENNIFER: I am, therefore, I exist.

JOHN: Therefore I am existing-

JENNIFER: How about you prove us wrong?

JOHN: Prove what?

JANE: Prove that JC doesn't exist.

JOHN: Shall I ?

JANE: You should.

JENNIFER: *[More insistently]* You should!

[John picks up the handbags, walks to the window open its and throws the handbags out. Turns back around]

JOHN: I have

[Both women simultaneously fall to the ground]

JOHN: Next stop driver

[Bus continues. This is represented by the bus engine humming and the reverse signals. Darkness]

SCENE FIVE

“The government paid him well for every bush of alfalfa he did not grow. The more alfalfa he did not grow, the more money the government gave him and he spent every penny he did not earn on new land to increase the amounts of alfalfa he did not produce.”

JOSEPH HELLER *Catch-22*

[Blue Light. Steve, John, Jane and Jennifer are asleep in the aisle. The stage turns on its side Ego and Id sitting are at the back of the bus and they slowly walk around the other characters.]

EGO: Aha, the victim’s gallery. How very orthodox!

ID: What! More losses to the Great War? Poor, poor Mrs Jones.

EGO: They aren’t dead!

ID: So how are they victims?

EGO: They are victims of identity.

ID: Oh, so they are sleeping. Maybe we should recite them a bedtime story.

EGO: Wonderful idea!

ID: Ok, I’ll start you off ‘Once upon a time there lived...’

EGO: ‘ A south Indian woman, married to an American, who applied for US citizenship so that her father who had lived in the Third World could join the American Peace Corps. At the final stage of being *naturalised* in New York, the immigration officer said to her. “Do you swear that you will bear arms in defence of the United States?” Compounding the irony of her situation she replied, “No, I won’t do that.” He asked, “What do you mean?” She said, “I am pacifist, I do not believe in killing.” He said, “Who taught you that?” She said “Mahatma Ghandi.” He said, “Who is he?” She said, “A great Indian religious leader.” He said, “Well, you will have to get a note from him.” She said, ”I can’t. He is dead.” He said, “Well, get a note from whoever took his place.”

[Silence]

ID: *[Confused]* And they all lived happily ever after?

EGO: No, they all lived.

[Blue Light fades. Silence. Audience led to believe that the play has finished. Ego and Id bow and walk offstage. Id walks back onto the stage. Lights off. Ego remains offstage. Spotlight is on Id]

ID: Ego, where are you?

EGO: *[Offstage]* Let it go. It's over

ID: It can't be. That was hardly conclusive

EGO: *[Walks back on stage]* It can't conclude

ID: What, no real conclusion? But it can't be the end. It's just the beginning of the end.

EGO: The end is the beginning. Or so He said.

[A spotlight from above shines down on the bodies, the Ego and Id stand to the far left, their heads bowed down as if mourning. A Gregorian chant fills the room giving a religious impression. There is also humming and Hebrew chants. There is a long silence. A bell similar to that which is followed by a train announcement, is heard, breaking the silence.]

VOICE: This is your director here. I have but one thing to say, 'To thine own self be true'

[Gregorian chant is heard again as light fades, and is replaced by blue light]

ID: That's right, no narrative closure. Therefore, it's not worth remembering.

[Darkness. Curtains. Projection on screen]

'The golden rule is that there are no golden rules'

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

REFLECTION STATEMENT

The Omnibus, a drama play, is a representation of modern society's compromise of human values in order to enforce and maintain societal conventions. The intent of my work is to playfully challenge the three tiers of convention, which are imposing restrictions on human liberty and individualism. The three tiers are science and technology, religion and the head of the literary canon, Shakespeare. Whilst there are underlying themes and issues that deal with such concepts, the object is no more important than the subject. Such fluidness was to form within a postmodern frame. Whilst upholding my views, the postmodern values employed were equally important. In order to avoid simply offering yet another metanarrative, preaching moral rights and wrongs I adopted postmodern tendencies. There is no one-dimensional way to denote postmodernism; therefore a large part of my research involved familiarising myself with this often-nihilistic school. Preliminary research was undertaken in English Extension One, *Representation and Texts- Postmodernism*. Extension One formed the foundations for further research. With this background knowledge, I was able to embrace more complex aspects of postmodernism in Extension Two. I realised the strong link that existed between postmodernism and theatre of the absurd. Using both these contra-modernist movements, I came to terms with the fact that postmodernism and absurdist theatre was not characterised by a set of identifiable assumptions. Rather, consistency came in the form of 'tendencies'. Satire added another dimension to my major work. Modernist claims were analysed, appropriated and then satirised. In order to challenge 'moral consciousness' I used psychoanalytical concepts from Freudian psychology, materialised them, and included them as an integral part of my play through. The narrators *Ego* and *Id*, could not be utilised until their purpose in psychoanalysis was thoroughly comprehended. *Ego* and *Id* were satirised to discredit the broad assumptions made in psychology. The main disciples of the respective tiers of convention were also investigated- William Shakespeare, Bill Gates and God. Therefore the object and subject were extensively researched in order to allow form and content to coincide.

The audience here is theatregoers. However, I am not exclusively targeting my play at any particular age group. The intended audience is what I have labelled an *omni-audience*. It is my belief that my multi-layered script will offer different stimulation for different individuals and their level of understanding. There is no 'right' way of interpreting *The Omnibus*; each and every interpretation is equally as valid as the next. As soon as my play is staged, it no longer belongs to me- its artistic integrity is vested in the responders. Each responder will respond to the play in such a way that will reflect their own social, cultural and political standpoint. Rather than enforcing binary assumptions about 'right and wrong', 'good and evil', 'true and false', the audience is free to draw its own conclusion. There are two main elements in the play, which are the visual component and the literary component. The use of a revolving stage, freeze frames, epigraphs on a stage screen, lighting effects and costuming, visually communicates meaning. Verbal pyrotechnics, dialogue and soliloquies use language as the main proponent of meaning. Another element which is of less importance is sound. Whilst this component is obvious and somewhat expected, it does provide meaning in an alternate way and appeals to those who are

reached mainly by sound. These three components do not always combine to convey a synonymous meaning. At times they propose conflicting ideas. Developing a script, that at times, functions on different and incongruent levels caters for a broad audience. The script, therefore, does not have a single purpose as such, rather its purpose changes according to responder understanding.

Tackling such complex and interdisciplinary movements such as Absurdist Theatre, poststructuralism and postmodernism, I was left with an anarchic literary puzzle. After many unsuccessful attempts to 'put the puzzle together', or so to speak, I came to realise that disorientation was necessary. I understood that carefully constructed anarchy and disorientation is the key to successful absurdist, postmodern theatre. The modernist project preaches organisation, unity and harmony in literature- however I initially set out to subvert such conventions. Bearing this concept in mind I needed to structure the play in such a way that it can be comprehended, yet challenging at the same time. The epigraphs at the beginning of each scene introduced some consistency. The literary allusions were in place to prepare the audience for what was to follow. The susceptibility of language was also exposed through the manipulation of gags, syntax and clichés. Sentence disorientation was also intentional which leads one to question the role grammar plays in meaning construction. Appropriation of Shakespearean characters, themes and language serves to question the power behind the literary canon. I set out to show how we interpret Shakespeare in the orthodox way, irrespective of changing historical contexts. 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear' were taken out of their 17th century context, manipulated, and placed in the 2^{1st} century, and yet meaning was maintained. The inability to strip meaning from the 'Shakespearean convention' is representative of the repressive forces of modernism. Self-reflexiveness is a process whereby a composer draws attention to the process of text composition. This technique was employed in the last scene to expose the fictional nature of all literature. The issues dealt with in the play reach a high point, however the issues remain unsolved. The play therefore does not employ a climax, or even an anti-climax. What it does suggest is the constructed and artificial nature of epistemological writings which have dominated the arts in the past centuries. Literature is simply a composer's construction and therefore should not be used to describe human nature and set moral standards.

Whilst not all research is evident throughout the play, all investigation contributed either directly or indirectly. Direct links between investigation and composition are in the forms of allusions, pastiche, parody and through the employment of absurdist and postmodern tendencies. Indirect links between investigation and composition are the choices made to abandon certain ideas and concepts in favour of others. Although a lot of research and investigation were not directly used, the decision to use one idea instead of another played a paramount role in the development of the concept. This discrimination process led to many important decisions being made, and had profound influence on the final product. Concept development functioned within an ongoing cyclical framework of brainstorming, building, comparing and revising. Direct and indirect influences, therefore, were equally important in the development of the finished product. The log book also played a significant role in utilising investigation for the development of the

finished products. At times when I was uncertain as to where I was headed, reading the log book helped reinforce some of the results from prior investigation.

My final draft demonstrated the maturity and mastering of my concept. The concept did not change or take on a slightly different course, it simply evolved. The stage whereby I introduced the concept, my ideas were fragmented and unrelated. I had the problem of too many abstract ideas that at times contradicted each other. The realisation of concept development is evident in the interdependency and congruency of ideas and concepts. The initial problem of too many abstract ideas and surrealistic concepts was solved and what emerged was a logical, well-structured and coherent play. The relationships between characters and the development of characters were other indications that concepts had been realised. God, Shakespeare and Gates were paralleled to the point whereby their role in society became interchangeable. This fluidity is also indicative of concept realisation. A reading of the script by family members enabled me to become the responder and situate myself at the receiving end. Isolating myself from the script, stripping myself from the role of composer enabled me to see the play from a new perspective. Furthermore the epigraphs, whilst unrelated topically, historically and fictionally amalgamated to support the concepts prevalent in the play. This factor shows that despite historical and social difference among the pieces, structure can be achieved through disorientation.